Night Visit by BeingProtector

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Night Visit

Mike was in the midst of a dream when he heard his bedroom door being opened. He'd become attuned to every creak and twitch of his parents' house since – unbeknownst to them – the curious girl from the woods had come to stay. The dream faltered then fell away; he found himself wincing in the broadening band of light from the hall outside.

A diminutive figure stood in silhouette. It took a moment to recognise her – to be sure she wasn't part of his dream.

"Eleven?"

The figure came forward, closed the door behind her, and was enveloped in darkness again.

Mike's confusion turned to anxiety.

"El, you can't just walk around the house – not even at night!"

She paused, a black shape against the greys of his room. Even in his consternation Mike found time to appreciate the innocent dome of her buzz cut head. Her shape was boyish until light was thrown on her, and her face became soft and sympathetic. Against his better judgement, Mike sat up and switched on his bedside lamp, hoping a passing parent wouldn't catch the yellow sliver beneath his door.

Eleven the stranger, 011 the number, El the girl… Now Mike could see her wide, expressive eyes, and felt their longing from across the room, as they searched for a forgiving look from him. He relented quickly and gave a half grumpy nod, and Eleven came over to sit by him. She always moved in such a deliberate way, as if every gesture were significant, or precarious. The burden of her power was only partially known to him, though he was beginning to get a better idea. She had stared blankly at Dustin when his friend had challenged her to lift his Falcon…

Their friend. She was one of them now. But for how long?

Eleven was pulling the quilt back, and starting to get under it with him. Mike was horrified.

“El, are you mad? My parents would kill me if they found you in the *basement*, never mind my bed!”

She paused and gave him that searching, irresistible look that made him want to help. It really seemed as if all her concerns were completely different to his. He had always known warmth, humour, predictability. What had she known? He didn’t know for sure, but he could see so much of her past in her face. For all her strange, dense ability, coiled within her like a snake that would lash out when provoked, she could not conceal where those powers had led her, and what they had cost. Could a normal life even be possible for her? God knows what Mike would have done to Troy at school if he could move things with the power of his mind…

The boy felt the solemnity of thought on his face, and changed it for her sake.

“Look, let’s try reading a book again.” He grabbed one from his shelf and held it up for her. “*The BFG*.”

“BFG?” Eleven asked. She had a wonderful way of rendering the mundane special.

“Big Friendly Giant. He blows dreams into kids’ bedrooms. The other giants eat children, but he’s a good giant.”

Eleven looked at him in her open way, trusting yet skeptical.

Mike began reading. “Sophie couldn’t sleep. A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains. It was shining right on to her pillow. The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours. Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still. She tried very hard to doze off.”

Eleven curled up on his bed like a cat. She was wearing his old grey tracksuit bottoms and a giant blue T-shirt with paint stains on it. She kept her eyes on him.

“It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing

through the room on to her face. The house was absolutely silent."

Mike went on for a while, losing himself in the words, feeling the queasy tug of sleep in his limbs but fighting it. When he finished the first chapter, he looked up.

El was fast asleep, a beautiful bundle at the end of his bed, breathing slowly and safely.

Mike felt a sudden charge of tenderness in his heart, and shut the book. The clock read ten to three. The house was warm and silent. If he fell asleep now, he might wake up in the morning and be confronted by his mother, bewildered by this curious child on his bed.

So Mike sat still, and watched El as she slept in the hearth of his trust, with love and protectiveness stirring in his chest like waves over pebbles. This bliss would only last a few hours before he would wake her, groggy and yielding, to return to the basement tent he had made her when she first arrived. Until the dawn sun yawned through the sky and murmured birdsong, Mike would watch over her. How incredible that a girl so powerful could be so vulnerable too.